
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is this: **Is there any standard of authority anymore?**

America is a free country. Everyone is entitled to have their own religious beliefs. This does not mean that all religious beliefs are right. It just means that everyone is entitled to believe whatever he wishes to believe.

ILL: Everyone has a right to wear a watch. This does not mean that all watches have the correct time. If two people have different times, either one or both of those people are wrong, but both cannot be right. Both may be very close to the same time, but if there is any difference, one must be wrong.

How do we know who is right and who is wrong? There is a **standard** to go by you see. There is a clock in Greenwich, England which has the precise time on it and from that standard all the other watches in the world are set and compared to it. If there is a discrepancy, the clock in Greenwich is considered right and all other watches are considered wrong because the clock in Greenwich is the **standard**.

Question: Are any standards in religion? Is there a reference point from which we can gage religious beliefs?

A: Yes there is – the Bible – the 66 books of scripture known as the “Holy Bible.”

- In Mt 4:1-10 when Satan was tempting Jesus, the Lord would quote from the scriptures. He would say, “It is written ...” Satan never argued. He himself knew that this was a standard. It was an infallible gage from which to measure all beliefs in religion.
- In Mt 12:1-8 when the enemies of Jesus were condemning Him, Jesus quoted from the scriptures and those Pharisees became quiet and could not reply. Why? Because they realized that scriptures were authoritative – they were the recognized standard of authority in religion.

Why should the scriptures be considered a standard of authority? Because they are the words of God Himself.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

“inspiration” means “God breathed.” The words of the scripture are authoritative because God breathed (or spoke) those words that are written down. Four hundred twenty times the scriptures say, “Thus says the Lord ...” and then the words of the Lord are recorded.

God expected that we take the scriptures and read them (Eph 3:4), meditated upon them (1 Tim 4:15), and do what they say (Ja 1:22). He expected us to use the scriptures to settle our disagreements (Acts 15:1-17). God expected us to honor the scriptures by doing exactly what they say without altering their meaning (Rev 22:18-19). The words of God were written down so they could be referred to over and over again – so people could check and re-check what they say – so people could refer to them and ponder over what they say. But the scriptures do not change (Jn 10:35).

ILL: Clark Howard, a consumer advocate on the radio, always tells his audience to get things in writing. Why?

Because when something is written down:

- 1) People think more seriously about what they’re saying. This is why we have to write out the words “one hundred dollars” on a check. We cannot just write the numerals, but we must write the number out in words. Bankers know that when people write words out, they are thinking more carefully about what they’re writing and they are less likely to make mistakes.
- 2) People cannot forget something that is written down. It is a permanent record.

My friend, the written word of God was thought over very carefully by God as it was being written. He wrote it exactly as He wanted it and because it is written down, it

does not change. We tend to think that everything is changing, but the word of God is not changing. It is a permanent record of what God wants.

APPLICATION

Because the word of God contains the exact, precise wording of God's will, and because it is written down in permanent form, the written scriptures are the standard of authority.

What does this mean to you and me in a practical way? It means that some things being done in the name of religion are simply wrong. Anything that goes against what the scriptures say is wrong.

- The scriptures say that miracles would end with the completion of the NT (1 Cor 13:8-10). Therefore, anyone saying that miracles are still possible is wrong. Miracles are not being done and they are not possible. Why? Because the scriptures say so. Will you believe it? Will you allow the scriptures to be the standard of authority? If you say, "I have seen miracles in my own life with my own eyes, and I know they still exist," then you are not allowing the scriptures to be the standard of authority. You are allowing your experiences and personal observations become your standard. Remember, the Bible says, "*We walk by faith and not by sight*" (2 Cor 5:7). If you must choose to believe what the Bible says (God's standard of authority) or you must choose to believe what you think you're seeing with your own eyes. What will be your standard of authority? Will you walk by faith, or will you walk by sight?
- The scriptures say that baptism in water is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Therefore, if you have been baptized for any other reason than for forgiveness, you are not saved from your sins. If you say, "There are millions and millions of Christian people who have never been baptized for the remission of sins," then your standard of authority is not the scriptures, but popular vote. Jesus taught plainly that the way to heaven is narrow and only a few will enter (Mt 7:13-14). You must choose to believe what the Bible says (God's standard of authority) or you must choose to believe fallible men. The choice is yours, but the Bible says, "Let God be true and every man a liar" (Rom 3:4).

Many more examples could be given, but this is enough to illustrate the point. The scriptures are the standard of authority – not our feelings, not our thoughts, not majority vote, not what we think we are seeing with our own eyes. Remember, magicians and illusionists make millions of dollars each year convincing people that they're seeing something that's not really happening. We cannot trust our eyes, but we can trust the scriptures – because they came from God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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